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bing propensities of those who are unable to rise above the rubbish which surrounds them, I cannot exactly agree with the writer in his conjecture, and am inclined to believe that he is better versed in antiquarian than in heraldic lore, and therefore has fallen into mistakes out of which I may possibly extricate him. Being somewhat acquainted with heraldry, and having made antiquarian researches a part of my study, I venture to assert that the monument in question is not the tomb of the Countess of Desmond, or any of her family, but that of Elizabeth, the daughter and heiress of Gerald, earl of Kildare, who was the first wife of James, the fourth earl of Ormond. This indeed removes all difficulties; all the escutcheons of arms are in perfect order and position. The royal arms of England show the descent of the Butlers from the Plantagenets; the Butler coat is on the husband's side; the Fitzgeralds on the wife's; the cross on the first escutcheon may be, and possibly was, intended to represent that of St. George.

The lady to whom I assign this monument died about the year 1400. The architecture is of that period; and, as above stated, the heraldry tells the tale exactly. Is any further proof necessary?

I will merely add, in conclusion, that the haughty and powerful earl of Desmond was not likely to acknowledge by his own act the superiority of his wife's family, by placing her arms in the most honorable position, to the degradation of his own; nor was such a practice usual even where the disparity of rank was much greater than between the Desmonds and Ormonds.

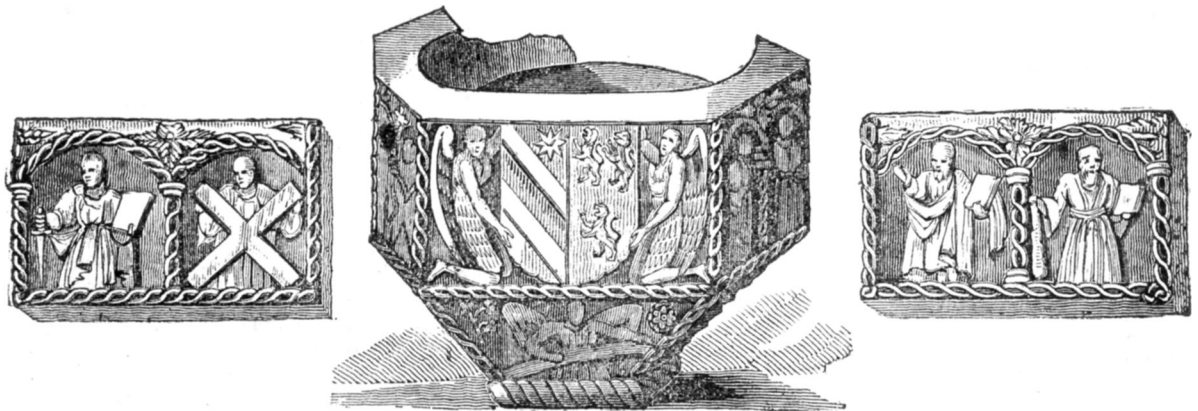
Hoping that your useful Journal may be made the vehicle of much future antiquarian information, and wishing success to your exertions, I am, &c.

*Stradbrook House.*

WILLIAM BETHAM.

As the elucidation of truth is at all times our paramount object, we have great pleasure in giving publicity to the above communication from our kind and worthy friend, the Ulster King—the most competent authority on such a question. For his opinion we have the most sincere respect, and are free to acknowledge, that we should not have ventured on the publication of the article commented on, without consulting him, but that he was at the time, and for some weeks previous, out of the country. But though we do not desire to uphold an opinion one moment for the sake of argument, or to maintain a claim to antiquarian infallibility, we must, notwithstanding, confess with every deference, that Sir William has not quite convinced us that we have been in error—and though it is not unlikely that we may be wrong, we are strongly inclined to believe that he is far from being right. We shall endeavour to make this apparent. In the age, which we were the first to assign to this remarkable monument, Sir William concurs; he differs with us only as to the person for whom it was erected, who, he asserts, was not the daughter of James, the Second Earl of Ormond and Countess of Desmond, but the daughter and heiress of Gerald, Earl of Kildare, who was the first wife of James, the Fourth Earl of Ormond. To come to this conclusion, it is in the first place, obviously necessary to prove that the arms on the fourth shield, are those of Kildare and not of Desmond. It is on the admission of this premise that all Sir William's conclusions rest. But though he takes this for granted, we do not; as he has advanced no evidence to support this supposition; while on the other hand it is to be observed, that in the engraving of the tomb given in the year 1772, by O'Halloran, the arms are undoubtedly those of Desmond; and that in a recent etching, by Mr. D. Gurney, they appear also to be of that family. Secondly, even though we should concede this point to Sir William, his conclusions are not borne out by facts; for it appears by unquestionable historical evidences—first, that James, the Fourth Earl of Ormond, was not married before the year 1400, the period assigned by Sir William for his wife's death, or even of age in the year 1407, in which year his wardship was granted to Thomas, Duke of Lancaster, son of Henry IV. Secondly, though it is true that his first wife was, as Sir William states, the daughter of Gerald, Earl of Kildare, her name was not Elizabeth but Joan; and though this difference of name is of little consequence, it is certain that the Countess can have no claim to the monument in question, as we have evidence that she died in London, in the year 1430, and was buried there in the hospital of St. Thomas D'Acre, to which her husband had been a great benefactor. There was also at a later period, another intermarriage between the noble houses of Ormond and Kildare, when in 1485, Pierce, the Eighth Earl of Ormond married the celebrated Lady Margaret, the daughter of Gerald, the Eighth Earl of Kildare;—but the claim of this lady must, equally with that of her predecessor, be set aside, as it is certain that she was interred with her husband in the cathedral of Kilkenny, as appears from the inscription on their magnificent tomb, still remaining. Are we not justified, therefore, in replying that further proof is necessary before we should be satisfied that we are in error, or that, at least, Sir William himself is nearer the truth?

P.



ANCIENT BAPTISMAL FONT, ST. PETER'S, DROGHEDA.

The font, of which the above is a representation, formerly occupied a conspicuous place in the Collegiate Church of Saint Peter's at Drogheda—a building which, although long destroyed, in former days yielded to none in this kingdom in extent or magnificence—its precincts contained several chapels and oratories, erected and dedicated by the piety of individuals renowned in their day. At various times, within its walls, were held Synods for the regulation of the spiritual concerns of Ireland, over which, the venerable Primates of Armagh presided—and beneath its floor, reposed the ashes of those who, in this life, ruled and swayed the destinies of thousands.

We have strong evidence to prove this church was rich in ornament and decoration; and that the various arts then in use for the enrichment of ecclesiastical edifices were put in requisition for its embellishment. In "Guilim's Display of Heraldry," page 327, (printed A.D. 1660) the following example occurs:—"He beareth argent, a cheuron engrailed between three trumpets sable, by the name of Thunder; this coat armour standeth in a glass window, in St. Peter's Church, in Drogheda, in Ireland," and we have record in Harris's Collections, vol. 2d, as quoted by Archdall, that "the steeple of this church, supposed to be the highest then in the world, was thrown down

by a violent tempest, about midnight of the 27th Jan. 1548." This steeple was subsequently replaced by one of wood, which continued until 1649, when Cromwell, like a destroying angel, swept the land with the besom of destruction;—after forcing an entrance into this devoted town, he caused this "church to be fired," and in it he acknowledges "above 2000 persons were put to the sword, flying thither for safety. See the 36th number of the Journal.

The ancient church of St. Peter's never recovered this visitation; that it was partially repaired, is evident from a view of the town, engraved in 1692, in possession of the writer, in which it is represented as having a steeple; but in the year 1740, it was entirely removed and the present beautiful edifice, of Grecian architecture, erected on its site.

Among the ornaments in the original church, the subject of this notice must have been conspicuous: it presents a very beautiful specimen of ancient art; and being composed of lime-stone, the produce of the neighbouring quarries, is evidently the work of a native artist.

In form, it is an octagon—a figure usually employed by the ancient Christian Irish in the construction of baptisteries; examples of which we have at Mellifont Abbey, County of Louth, St. Doulagh's, County of Dublin, &c.—The entire outer surface is elaborately carved; the front

facet, contains an escutcheon, empaled baron and femme, supported by two angels in a kneeling posture, the bodies and limbs of which are represented as covered with plumage; three of the compartments are destroyed, but probably correspond with three of those that remain, which are each divided into two circular-headed niches deeply recessed; each niche containing the figure of an apostle, distinguished by his peculiar badge: thus, St. Andrew with his cross; St. Paul with a sword, and so on; the remaining division is occupied by a representation of the baptism of Christ. The soffets are each filled by the figure of a demi angel, with wings displayed, supporting a plain scroll; in the corners of the soffets are the rose and shamrock; the angles of the entire font are ornamented by a continuous wreathing or chain work, which is also continued round, and forms the outline of the arched niches. There are neither dates or inscriptions; and the base is finished by a roped member.

The arms in the escutcheon are, first—Azure, a bend voided argent in chief, a star of the second; secondly—Argent, three lions rampant azure; the latter coat is that belonging to the name of Mildmay, it also appertains, with a change of tincture, to the family of Fynes, of Fynestown castle, near Navan, County of Meath. Of the first coat I have not been able to find an appropriation, but have discovered it with the bearing reversed (a sign of illegitimacy) empaled with that of Dardis, in St. Peter's church-yard. The carving is in bold relief and skilfully executed; a good deal of tasteful design is manifested in the disposition of the drapery of the first figure in each compartment. The other figures are clothed in close plaited tunics; the sharpness of the engraving is worn off by time and abuse, and the features defaced, but the tansured head and peaked beard are still discernible; on the whole it has been well worthy of occupying the prominent situation it undoubtedly formerly held; but now—what a reverse—part of it, as before observed, is destroyed, probably by the sacrilegious hands of Cromwell's fanatic soldiers—and this venerable relic of the piety, taste, and munificence of our ancestors, is now consigned to oblivion, and lies neglected and unknown in the yard of the Sexton's house; and this sacred laver, from which so many of our fellow Christians received the initiatory rite of baptism and the seal of our faith, is now shamefully desecrated, by being made a receptacle for the food of the filthiest of animals. Perhaps if this notice meets the eye of the present incumbent, (who, we are conscious, is utterly ignorant of its very existence,) it may induce him or some other active parish officer, to have it removed to a situation more worthy of it, and more congenial to the feelings of the present generation.

*Rahenny, April, 1833.*

R. ARMSTRONG.

## THE PROSPECTS AND DUTY OF IRISHMEN IN REFERENCE TO THE ACQUISITION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

CAN it be an enthusiast's dream, that a better day is dawning upon this long-distracted country? Is IRELAND ever to remain THE LAND OF IRE, the region of the storm and the whirlwind, the homestead of strife and contention? Or are peace and concord about to re-establish their reign, and bring with them the blessings which follow wherever their influence is felt?

It may be a dream that Ireland is undergoing such a change—yet we will indulge it. It may be an illusion that the storm is passing away, that its violence and fury have been checked, that the light of intellect is beginning to stream over the land, that our countrymen are about to vindicate their characters as a rational and intelligent people in the face of the nations of the earth. It may be a dream that men of all parties are drawing nearer to each other, that strong political prejudices are melting away, that party feeling is merging into a desire for national improvement, and national union. It may be all poetry, it may be all romance—yet what we wish for, we most willingly believe. Oh, that our feeble accents could be heard echoing along every valley of this green and fertile land! People of Ireland! we would appeal to

you. Are ye ignorant of the worth of knowledge, or deficient in zeal for its acquisition? No! But peculiar circumstances have interfered with your best interests—the glorious principle of universal CHARITY has not presided over the literature of the country. Yet that nation will not ascend to the higher region of intellectual being, which knows no literature but what is subservient to strife and division, whose authorship drags religion from her holy seclusion, and disturbs her calm serenity by the shouting of hostile war-cries. Never, never, will the charities of social life abound, nor the inalienable right of freedom of thought, and word, and action, prevail, until the humanising influence of the arts and sciences is felt over the entire community, until men learn to think freely and to differ with good-will, until the voice of reason can charm the power of prejudice, until men's minds are in some measure isolated, so that a look of jealousy or a touch of suspicion will not run electrically through the mass, until religious and political considerations are assigned their proper station, and philosophy is rescued from its bondage to sectarianism.

When the questions which divide classes of men are felt by them to be vitally important, affecting their equality and rights in this world, and their existence as immortal beings in the next, and when there is a fierce struggle between the rival parties, each striving for the mastery, then every minor subject connected with the arts, with literature, and with science, is merged into the greater and paramount matters of debate, or they receive a chromatic glow, deceptive and illusory. But when the storm is high, when the winds are whistling wildly, will the sweet and plaintive tones of music be heard in the gale—when men's passions are roused, will the quiet and gentle accents of peace find their way to the heart? No! there must be calmness, there must be repose, the feeling of exasperation must have passed away, the sense of inferiority and superiority must be subdued, ere the attention will be given to the more abstract considerations of intellectual life: but when the causes of exacerbation are removing, when men, whose opinions had rendered them individually repulsive, are drawing near, and perceiving that each possess human hearts and human sympathies, when the power of prejudice is gradually, though slowly, melting away, is there not glorious hope of a resurrection of genius and of taste, a dawning of a better day, when the hurricane of passion will have abated, and the gentler feelings of humanity rejoice in the light and warmth of the morning sun?

Ireland stands precisely in such a position. Britain is free, in a great measure, from the causes which obstruct the progress of literature in this country, and therefore is she proceeding with majestic step. Public taste and knowledge are rapidly improving and widely extending; and an inhabitant of England or Scotland, unacquainted with the manifold springs of bitterness which have flowed so long in Ireland, forms strange and distorted ideas of the genius and disposition of the inhabitants of an island not untruly characterised as being "blessed by God, and cursed by man." It would be the fondness of folly to affirm that the acerbities of strife are softened down, and that all classes already hail each other with affectionate joy. It would be an affectation to say that at our approach all classes, however jealous at other times and on other subjects, receive us with unhesitating cordiality, and that in our Journal the eagle eye of party has never detected a pictorial illustration to mean more than met the view, or a traitorous phrase which did not contain beneath it a lurking poison—no! we cannot breathe so freely yet in Ireland. But that we have done much—VERY MUCH—to effectuate so great a good, it is our right and our privilege to say, nor will the dread of the imputation of egotism deter us from affirming it on all proper occasions, for there are times when reiterated declarations of purity of motive indicates not personal vanity but earnestness of purpose. And our very hearts are set on the delightful though frequently thankless and ungracious task of clearing away the rank weeds which pester our fields of literature; we desire to spread a table at which all may sit down; to draw towards a common platform those who differ, and teach our countrymen that there are